



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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**GOVERNOR LINGLE AND LT. GOVERNOR AIONA PROCLAIM
FEBRUARY AS HUMPBACK WHALE AWARENESS MONTH**

HONOLULU --Governor Linda Lingle and Lt. Governor James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr. have signed a proclamation declaring February as "Humpback Whale Awareness Month" in Hawai'i.

The goal of Humpback Whale Awareness Month is to enhance public awareness of Hawai'i's official state marine mammal and increase public involvement in ocean stewardship.

Hawai'i is home to the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary, the only marine protected area in the nation solely devoted to humpback whale protection.

In the official proclamation, Governor Lingle and Lt. Governor Aiona "encourage (Hawai'i) citizens to commit to the protection of Hawai'i's spectacular humpback whales for future generations."

"I invite the public to enjoy the sanctuary's Humpback Whale Awareness Month activities and celebrate the homecoming of our amazing humpbacks," said Governor Lingle.

The sanctuary is celebrating Humpback Whale Awareness Month by offering a variety of special activities around the state. Activities vary from lunchtime whale watches to special lecture presentations at various venues. Find out more about getting involved in Humpback Whale Awareness Month at: <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>

(more)

“We continue to need the *kokua* of our boating community to reduce the occurrence of vessel-whale collisions,” said Laura H. Thielen, Department of Land and Natural Resources Chairperson. “We expect Humpback Whale Awareness Month will help get the word out about collision avoidance and other important ocean resources management priorities.”

“Hawai‘i is a special place for humpback whales,” said Naomi McIntosh, Sanctuary Superintendent. “Because Hawai‘i is the only state in the United States where humpbacks mate, calve and nurse, it is essential that they are protected here. Humpback Whale Awareness Month provides opportunities for the public to find out more about the sanctuary and humpback whales, and learn how anyone in Hawai‘i can play a role in protecting humpback whales and Hawai‘i’s other ocean resources.”

The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary is co-managed as a federal-state partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) seeks to increase public awareness of America’s marine resources and maritime heritage by conducting scientific research, monitoring, exploration, and education programs.

In the Pacific Islands region, NOAA ONMS is a partner with the State of Hawai‘i in co-managing the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary and Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

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